

CLAIMS

1. A communications network adapted to communicate with communications devices via wireless connections, the communications network comprising:
 - 5 a number of independent nodes, each node including at least one transceiver for communicating with a wireless communications device;
 - a server for controlling the operation of the network nodes; and,
 - a communications link for coupling the nodes to the server in series.
- 10 2. A communication network according to claim 1, each node including a first portion of a processing stack coupled to the transceiver, and the server including a second portion of the processing stack, the first and second portions of the processing stack being adapted to communicate with each other via the communication link.
- 15 3. A communications network according to claim 2, wherein the first and second portions of the processing stack are coupled to the communications link via respective first and second TCP/IP stacks, the communications link operating in accordance with a TCP/IP communications protocol.
- 20 4. A communications network according to claim 3, wherein the second TCP/IP stack being adapted to provide a virtual connection to each first TCP/IP stack via the communications link.
- 25 5. A communications network according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the communications link comprises an Ethernet connection.
6. A communications network according to any of the preceding claims wherein the server includes a power supply, and wherein power is coupled to the nodes via the communications link.
- 30 7. A communications network according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the network is adapted to communicate with the communications devices via a Bluetooth connection, the first and second portions of the processing stack comprising first and second portions of a Bluetooth stack.

8. A node for use in a communications network adapted to communicate with communications devices via wireless connections, the node including:
- 5 at least one transceiver for communicating with a wireless communications device;
- a first port for coupling the node to the server via a communications link; and,
- a second port for coupling the network node to another independent node via the communications link.
- 10 9. A node according to claim 8, wherein the node is coupled to the server via at least one intermediate node, the first port of the node being coupled to the second port of the intermediate node.
10. A node according to claim 8 or claim 9, wherein the node further comprises a
- 15 first portion of a processing stack, the first portion being coupled to the transceiver and to the first and second ports, and being adapted to communicate with a second portion of the processing stack located in the server.
11. A node according to any of claims 8 to 10, the node being adapted to
- 20 communicate with the communications devices via a Bluetooth connection.
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12. A node according to claim 11, when dependent on claim 10, wherein the processing stack is a Bluetooth stack.
13. A server for use in a communications network, the communications network having a number of independent nodes adapted to communicate with communications devices via wireless connections, the server including:
- 25 a processor for controlling the operation of the nodes;
- a port for coupling the server to the nodes via a communications link; and,
- 30 a power supply coupled to the port for supplying power to the nodes via the communication link.

14. A server according to claim 13, wherein the processor forms a second portion of a processing stack, the second portion being adapted to communicate with first portions of the processing stack located in the nodes.

5 15. A server according to claim 13 or claim 14, wherein the nodes are adapted to communicate with the communications devices via a Bluetooth connection, and wherein the processing stack is a Bluetooth stack.

10 16. A communications network according to any of claims 1 to 7, the network comprising a number of nodes according to any of claims 8 to 12 coupled to a server according to any of claims 13 to 15 via a communications link.